

## RURAL FREE DELIVERY IN NEW YORK STATE

Starting in 1896 a number of office in diverse locations around the country were selected on an experimental basis for providing rural delivery and pick-up of mail. The first route in New York was approved October 15, 1896 for Elba, Genesee Co. By June 1900 there were 42 offices with 62 routes; however, in the experimental period no specific postal markings were used to delineate the service.

Starting in mid-1900 government-issue hand cancels with straight line daters and barred killers showing route numbers were provided to carriers. New York 1900 markings are scarce with about 25 known. By June 1901 232 routes had been approved from 134 offices. The government issuance of hand stamps ceased as of July 1, 1903. A study has shown that 482 New York offices can be identified as receiving the issued hand stamps with a possible 1067 routes.

In a classification system established by H. Richow the government-issue hand stamps are of two basic types with five privately produced types known from New York. Where hand stamps were not issued or when they wore out, a manuscript cancellation procedure was defined but not monitored. Postal history evidence suggests that it gradually became more common for the mail to be returned to the home office for canceling.



Newark, Wayne Co.

Route 2 of two

Approved September 5, 1899

Earliest N.Y. hand stamp

Pages 2 & 3. Government-issue cancels

Pages 4 thru 7. Privately prepared cancels

Pages 8 & 9. County System with Postal and Rural Stations

Page 10. RFD cancels that went to foreign destinations

Pages 11 thru 14. Postal Services

Pages 14 thru 16. The range of manuscript cancels and thereafter